

Liberals remain wedded to WorkChoices despite need for workers to be protected in downturn

The decision by the Coalition today to oppose the Rudd Government's proposed new industrial relations laws and seek substantial amendments shows that the Liberal and National Parties remain wedded to WorkChoices says the ACTU.

"People are worried about their own jobs and those of their family in the current downturn," said ACTU President Sharan Burrow.

"They want the security of stronger IR laws that protect their rights. The worsening economic situation means it is vital that we get rid of what remains of WorkChoices.

"At a time like this, when workers are losing their jobs and paying for what greedy executives have done, Australians need to get back their rights at work with fairer, new IR laws."

"But the Liberal Party is siding with big business and is turning its back on working Australians again," said ACTU President Sharan Burrow.

"Only a few months ago Mr Turnbull said that he would respect the Labor Government's mandate to change unfair dismissal laws but now the Liberals are now opposing the restoration of unfair dismissal protection for the more than three million workers who lost it under WorkChoices.

"The Coalition is also rejecting the right of Australian workers to get advice and representation from unions.

"The Liberals' proposals would be a green light for employers to rip off workers during the economic downturn.

A recent national poll conducted by the ACTU shows that Liberal and National Party are way out of step with public opinion:

- Almost seven in ten Australians (67%) want the Rudd Government to keep its election promise to get rid of WorkChoices and the Parliament should pass new, fairer IR laws as soon as possible.
- 77% of Australians support restoring unfair dismissal protections for all workers.
- 74% support collective bargaining rights for all workers
- More than three quarters of Australians (76%) want to get rid of laws that restrict workers from accessing advice from unions in their workplace.
- Eight out of ten Australians (80%) agree that workers should have the right to be represented by the union of their choice, not a union selected by their employer.

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